Claims:

1. Peptide, immunochemically reactive with antibodies to the Epstein Barr Virus, comprising at least part of the VCA-p18 or VCA-p40 protein, encoded within the EBV open reading frames BFRF3 and BdRF1 respectively, or a functional variant thereof.

2. Peptide according to claim 1, comprising at least part of the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID No.: 2 or a functional variant thereof.

3. Peptide according to claim 1, comprising at least part of the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID No.: 4 or a functional variant thereof.

4. Peptide according to claim 2, comprising at least one of the aminoacid sequences choosen from the amino acid sequences as shown in SEQ ID NO:5 and SEQ ID NO:6.

5. Peptide according to claim 4, comprising the aminoacid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO:5 linked to the amino acid sequences as shown in SEQ ID NO:6.

6. Nucleic acid sequence encoding a peptide according to any of claims 1-5.

7. Nucleic acid sequence, comprising at least part of the nucleic acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO.: 1.

8. Nucleic acid sequence, comprising at least part of the nucleic acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO.: 3.

9. A recombinant vector molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence according to any of claims 6-8.

10. A host cell transformed or transfected with a recombinant vector according to claim 9.

11. Antibody directed to a peptide according to any of claims 1-5.

12. Antibody according to claim 11, the antibody being a monoclonal antibody.

13. Monoclonal antibody, having the same reactivity with VCA-p18 as monoclonal antibody EBV.OT15E or EBV.OT15I produced by the rat-mouse hybridoma cell lines deposited with the European Collection of Animal Cell Cultures (ECACC), Porton Down (UK), under deposit No. 93020413 and 93020412 respectively.

14. Monoclonal antibody having the same reactivity with VCA-p40 as monoclonal antibody EBV.OT41A produced by the mouse-mouse hybridoma cell line deposited with the European Collection of Animal Cell Cultures (ECACC), Porton Down (UK), under deposit No. 93020414.

15. Immortalized cell line capable of producing monoclonal antibodies according to claim 13 or 14.

16. Immortalized cell line according to claim 15, deposited with the European Collection of Animal Cell Cultures (ECACC), Porton Down (UK), under deposit No. 93020413 or 93020412 or 93020414.

17. Anti-idiotypic antibody reactive with the antibody according to claim 11.

18. Immunochemical reagent comprising one or more peptide(s) according to any of claims 1-5.

19. Immunological reagent comprising one or more antibodies according to any of claims 11-14.

20. Method for the detection of Epstein-Barr virus in a sample characterized in that an antibody according to any of claims 11-14 is brought into contact with a

sample whereafter the presence of immune complexes formed is detected which is ameasure for the presence of Epstein-Barr virus in the sample.

21. Method for the detection of antibodies directed against Epstein-Barr Virus in a sample, characterized in that an immunochemical reagent according to claim 14 is brought into contact with the sample and the presence of immune complexes formed between the peptide and antibodies in the sample is detected, which is a measure for the presence of Epstein Barr Virus antibodies in the sample.

22. Method for the detection of Epstein-Barr Virus in a sample characterized in that one or more peptides according to any of claims 1-5 are brought into contact with sample and antibodies directed Epstein-Barr Virus, whereafter the presence of immune complexes formed is detected and from this the presence of Epstein-Barr Virus in the sample is determined.

23. Method for the amplification and the detection of an Epstein-Barr Virus nucleic acid sequence in a sample using at least one nucleic acid sequence or fragment thereof according to claim 6-8 as primer(s) in order to perform a nucleic acid amplification of said Epstein-Barr Virus nucleic acid sequence and to detect the amplified sequence.

24 ~~17~~. Test kit for carrying out a method according to any of claims 20-22.

25 ~~18~~. Test amplification kit for carrying out an amplification method according to claim 23.